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RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000446

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL PREF CG
SUBJECT: CURRENT CNDP INTERNAL DYNAMICS: NKUNDA LOYALISTS
BACK IN THE FOLD

REF: KINSHASA 422

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: We recently met with Maitre Muiti, one of
Nkunda's former right-hand men. He confirmed the return of
Nkunda loyalists to the CNDP political fold. However, Muiti
underscored the CNDP leadership's anxiety about the GDRC's
commitment to the March 23 agreement, and he cast doubts on
the robustness of the integration process. End summary.

CNDP Leadership

¶2. (C) As reported (reftel), the CNDP leadership met at
Kirolirwe (Nkunda's longtime headquarters in Masisi) on April
26 to elect -- for the third time in four months -- its
political officers. Desire Kamanzi was confirmed as
President and Jean Munyampenda was given a wide-ranging brief
for political affairs, which Muiti described as amounting to
a "Minister of the Interior" portfolio. More significantly,
several Nkunda-loyalists were promoted or returned to
leadership positions. Jean Nzabirinda (Hutu) was made
Vice-President; Kambasu Ngeve (Nande) moved from deputy to
full Secretary-General; Muiti (Hunde) expects to be confirmed
as permanent secretary to the political bureau; and, most
interestingly, Rene Abandi (Tutsi) -- recently returned from
self-imposed exile in Rome -- was re-appointed to the
external relations position that he held under Nkunda.

Agreement with the GDRC

¶3. (C) Muiti said that the CNDP leadership is very
apprehensive about the GDRC's lack of follow-up to the March
23 agreement (Comment and Note: However, subsequent to our
conversation with Muiti, we learned that Prime Minister
Muzito signed the decree creating the national monitoring
committee ("Comite de Suivi") for the agreement. Muiti must
not have known about this important step forward at the time.
 Nevertheless, meaninful progress will be necessary to allay
lingering CNDP concerns. End comment and note).

Integration

¶4. (C) Muiti claimed that hundreds of CNDP fighters had
deserted from the FARDC. Part of the problem was non-payment
of salaries; another issue was that the FARDC was trying to
move many of them away from their home areas. Muiti added
that most of the CNDP troops were principally focused on
defending their communities, not serving in a an army with
responsibilities throughout the entire DRC. He claimed that
40 percent of PARECO fighters had deserted post-integration

for the same reasons (Comment: We are skeptical as to the veracity of this claim. End comment). At the same time, he also said that the CNDP has an interest in closer relations with PARECO-Hutu.

¶5. (C) Comment: The return of Nkunda-loyalists to the CNDP leadership fold is significant. It augurs well for those espousing a Rwandophone agenda, although we are not prepared to support or oppose such an agenda at this point. It also appears that the "new CNDP" and its supporters in Kinshasa and Kigali continue to prefer a policy of inclusion for those initially opposed to the "hostile takeover" of the CNDP, rather than a policy aimed to punish the "old CNDP" elements.
 Abandi's return means that the only significant member of the "old CNDP" to remain outside the fold is Bertrand Bisimwa, Nkunda's former spokesman and possible brother-in-law. A knowledgeable source maintained that the old guard has access to large bank accounts and to significant, ongoing diaspora funding, an incentive to bring them back into the movement. Muiti's comment about integrated CNDP fighters deserting the FARDC points to a negative and potentially destabilizing dynamic within the integration process. End comment.
GARVELINK